



CITY OF MIAMI SPRINGS, FLORIDA

The **Miami Springs Education Advisory Board** met at 6:30 p.m., on Tuesday, April 17, 2012 in the City Hall Council Chambers.

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m.

1) Call to Order/Roll Call

The following were present: Chair Robert J. Gordon
Vice Chair Dr. John Salomon
Libby Manning
Golnaz Sami
Dr. Mara Zapata

Also Present: Deputy City Clerk Suzanne Hitafter

2. Approval of Minutes: March 20, 2012 Regular Meeting

Minutes of the March 20, 2012 meeting were approved as written.

Vice Chair Salomon moved to approve the minutes as written and Board member Sami seconded the motion, which carried unanimously on voice vote.

3. Special Reports and Presentations

Report from the MDCPS Office of Intergovernmental Affairs

Lubby Navarro, Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, reported that school districts across the state received an increase in funding of \$1.5BB, including \$80MM to Miami-Dade. Even though there was an increase, it was only enough to cover last year's cut in funding.

Ms. Navarro informed the Board that the District is reviewing \$81MM of proposed cuts and the recommendations for next school year are being reviewed by the Superintendent in conjunction with his Senior Staff. The recommendations will most likely be presented to the School Board in May. She explained that it will be a difficult time for the school districts, particularly Miami-Dade County, because local issues include increasing health care costs, \$15MM for Charter Schools, and \$3MM to \$5MM for utilities, not counting increases. In addition, the reduction in the millage rate and property tax values might be 13% less.

To answer Chair Gordon's question, Ms. Navarro clarified that the budget for the District is approximately 13% of the total state budget.

Ms. Navarro reported that the School Superintendent had reached the \$70MM goal in raising funds for the wiring of all schools, with the help of a matching federal grant. She said that this is a very important mission and students are being asked to complete an on-line survey in regard to the level of technology that they have at home, since this a movement to a text book free environment.

The School Superintendent made a decision to cancel the bus tour of the Miami Springs schools, according to Ms. Navarro. She said that after receiving feedback from the schools, it was determined that this is a critical time for students to perform to their highest abilities for the FCAT testing and other tests that will be ongoing for the next six weeks. She explained that the bust tour is being postponed until late October or the beginning of November.

Ms. Navarro distributed information on the status of the proposed changes to school grades as a result of the February 2012 State Board meeting. She explained that Gisela Fields is the Director of Assessment for Miami-Dade County Public Schools and she was not able to attend tonight due a previous commitment.

Chairman Gordon stated that he is planning a Town Hall forum at the May 15th Education Advisory Board meeting and he would like to know if Ms. Fields would be available. He explained that it will be a time for parents to ask questions about the changes.

Ms. Navarro explained that the District representatives would definitely like to participate in the Town Hall meeting. The Superintendent is concerned regarding the upcoming changes and the Education Committee is working on community awareness.

Miami Springs Bullying Prevention Initiative

Kim Werner stated that she is a Miami-Dade County Public School counselor and also an Olweus Bullying Prevention Program trainer. Her concept has always been feeder pattern bullying prevention training and she came up with an idea for a community-wide bullying prevention initiative for Miami Springs that will take place at the Rebeca Sosa Theatre on Wednesday, May 16th from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Ms. Werner invited all school counselors to attend the event that she is planning through her company called “A Piece Full World”. She explained that she spoke with City Manager Gorland who was very receptive to her idea.

To answer Board member Manning’s question, Ms. Werner said that the event would not be for one particular age group; the focus would be community-wide. She would like to have counselors attend and she invited a local therapist who works with bullied youth. She is hoping that after showing the movie “Bully” it will open the conversation. She emphasized that the community must come together to address the problem head-on.

Ms. Werner continued to explain more about the details of the event. She added that the City Manager is waiving the fee for use of the theatre.

To answer Chairman Gordon’s question, Ms. Werner responded that she had made many presentations on bullying prevention. She trained two schools that were grant recipients of the Florida Bullying Prevention Initiative and she is one of ten trainers that were selected through the Florida Association of School Administrators.

Board member Zapata asked if the focus of the event is to create awareness of bullying in the community.

Ms. Werner commented that there is so much conversation about the topic of bullying and the community needs to come together to talk about what it is and how it is affecting the youth in the community schools. Her vision is to fill up the theatre and be able to talk and answer questions about bullying.

Board member Zapata asked if the legal ramifications would be discussed because parents need to know what to do and what rights their children have. She thinks that this question might be raised.

Ms. Werner responded that if the question comes up she would work to find an answer.

To answer Chairman Gordon’s question, Ms. Werner replied that the event would be posted on the City’s website and publicized in the River Cities Gazette.

4. School Reports

Miami Springs Middle School Principal Javier Perez reported on the following events and curricular activities:

- FCAT testing started and there was 98% attendance on the first two days.

- The tutoring academy and interventions have ended and the focus is on students that will be taking the end of course exams in April and early May for Algebra I, Geometry and Biology.
- One of the 7th grade teams went to Sea World and 152 students will attend the Marlin's game on April 30th.
- Staff Olympics was on March 30th with more than 72 teachers participating.
- The Girl's Basketball team won first place in the Junior Orange Bowl Classic out of twelve schools participating.
- The school painting project is 30% complete and it should be finished in four months.
- The P.T.A. spring catalog kick-off will be on Monday, April 30th.

Miami Springs Elementary School Principal Sally Hutchings reported on the following events and activities:

- Student artwork will be displayed at City Hall on May 7th from 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- The focus is on FCAT and it will be followed by the student Field Day.
- Two teachers have vegetable gardens.
- A parent workshop will be held on May 8th regarding transition to the middle school.
- Enrollment is up by two students, totaling 647.
- Field trips include the Butterfly World, Miami Children's Museum, Jungle Island, St. Augustine, Islands of Adventure and American Airlines.
- Mayor Garcia read to the pre-K students at the library.
- The school is hosting a community blood drive.
- Papa John's night is April 25th and the student debate will begin on May 7th.
- The P.T.A. will host a Celebration of the Arts on April 26th at 6:30 p.m. and an FCAT "Chill Out" on April 30th.

Principal Mayte Dovale of Springview Elementary reported on the following:

- A VPK lottery was held on April 9th with approximately 30 students participating; 19 students were selected and others were placed on a waiting list.
- SAT testing for grades K-2 went smoothly and now they are FCAT testing.
- The P.T.A. provided test taking tips and candy to help the students; the Food and Nutrition Department provided snacks for students on testing dates.
- The P.T.A. is planning a treat for students who meet their accelerated reading (AR) goals.
- Tutoring continues for students in grades 2-5 in the areas of reading, math and science.
- Students will be rewarded for completing Reading Plus, FCAT Explorer and the FCAT Camp.
- Reading Under the Stars is scheduled for May 16th and food trucks will be at the event.
- Report cards are distributed on Wednesday, April 18th.
- Students will be going to the "Lion King".

Chairman Gordon asked Ms. Dovale about the P.T.A. meeting when information was presented on FCAT, school grading and other topics and whether or not parents asked questions about how Springview will be affected.

Principal Dovale responded that there was not much feedback and normally parents filter through the information and come back with a couple of questions. She explained that no one had asked for any clarification and they were told that the information is still pending.

Chairman Gordon hopes that a forum would bring clarity on what is already being done at the school level so that people understand the new grading system and it will not be a surprise if the grades change.

Principal Dovale clarified that the PowerPoint presentation that was shared was provided by the District Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Miami Springs Senior High School Principal Anna Rodriguez displayed a copy of "ELAN" that is a school publication of poetry and artwork produced by the students. She noted the beauty of the artwork and the poetry and commented that the book had not been published for six years.

Principal Rodriguez continued to report the following school news:

- Mu Alpha Theta Math Club scored 5th overall in the Florida Math League state competition on April 2nd; three students achieved perfect scores.
- Student Government continues to engage in the Stop Hunger campaign by collecting canned food.
- The HOSA Club has one student competing at the national level next month.
- The school is now a Cambridge candidate school and will be receiving the official visitation next month. Teachers will receive on-line training during the summer and students will have the benefit of being to graduate with an international diploma.
- The school is now an iTECH Academy and the mathematics program is second to none in the county and the nation; the science program continues to strengthen and technology and engineering have been combined and taken to a different level. There are 125 seats that will open and the 8,000 sq. ft. compound for the business suite will be turned into a technology suite that is proposed to be finished by January 2013.

Principal Rodriguez explained that the iTECH Academy is a magnet program consisting of 125 students and everyone in the school will benefit from the Cambridge Program. She distributed copies of an informational pamphlet on the iTECH Academy Program. She also noted that the Miami Herald will be reporting on the new programs.

Principal Rodriguez also submitted an application from 11th grade student Lizelh Natalieh Ayala for the Youth Advisory Council.

To answer Board member Zapata's question, Principal Rodriguez clarified that the Cambridge Program is for academically high students, while students must meet certain criteria for iTECH, including a 2.5 grade point average and they are creating an honors track.

Board member Sami asked when is the application deadline for the iTECH Program and Principal Rodriguez responded that it is the week of June 12th. She added that the school website has a link with information and the application will be live tomorrow.

To answer Chair Gordon's question, Principal Rodriguez replied that the P.T.A. is meeting today and she knows that they had a booth at the Springs River Festival with information on the new program; they were also selling shirts, etc.

Chairman Gordon commented that he would be present at the school Book Awards on Wednesday, April 25th representing two schools.

Principal Rodriguez reported that all the interior doors in the school had been painted and she thanked the Region for their assistance in achieving that endeavor. She added that the bathrooms would reopen after being closed for five years thanks to the direction of Dr. Marinelli and Mr. Vidal.

Board member Manning wished luck to the Mu Alpha Theta Math Club at the state competition in Orlando. She also congratulated the Silver Knight nominees and the seniors who received their college acceptances.

Principal Rodriguez mentioned that she hopes to diversify the academic resume of the students with the Cambridge Program.

Vice Chair Salomon noted that there is a Miami Springs Senior High School student art exhibit in the City Hall lobby. He commended Principal Rodriguez for the "ELAN" publication.

5. PTA/PTSA Reports

There were no reports from the school PTA representatives.

6. Business/Reports

Chairman Gordon reported that the purpose of the next Education Advisory Board meeting would be to discuss school accountability and how it might be changing. He communicated with the Clerk of the Board and City Staff to see how the meeting could be advertised and he hopes to have a good representation of parents and community members attend and learn more about school accountability.

Chairman Gordon commented that one application for the Youth Advisory Council had been received from the High School. He asked Board member Sami if she could assist the other schools with their applications.

Board member Sami offered to send an e-mail to the schools regarding the Youth Advisory Council applications.

Board member Manning mentioned that the Education Advisory Board seems unbalanced with three Miami-Dade County Public School employees and she contacted Councilman Best to notify him that she would like to resign from the board before the next meeting. She added that she is frustrated not being able to speak with the other members outside of the meeting because of the Sunshine Law.

7. Other

Miami Springs Middle School Teacher Ms. Ferrer inquired about the new iTech Program at the High School and if it is only for the 9th graders. She asked what would happen with the students in the other grades who already attend the High School.


Principal Rodriguez responded that the program only applies to 9th grade students because of limited resources. She clarified that other students would continue taking AP courses.

Chairman Gordon reminded everyone that the May Education Advisory Board meeting would be the last one before the summer because there are traditionally no meetings in June, July or August.

8. Adjourn

There was no further business to discuss and the meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Suzanne Hitaffer
Clerk of the Board

Approved as written at meeting of: 05-15-2012

The comments, discussions, recommendations and proposed actions of City Citizen Advisory Boards do not constitute the policy, position, or prospective action of the City, which may only be established and authorized by an appropriate vote or other action of the City Council.
